



News Release

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Avoid Swimming When Sick

Diarrhea Outbreak is on the Rise

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is warning Utah residents to stay away from public or private pools when they are experiencing episodes of diarrhea. Over the past few weeks, many counties have seen dramatic increases in *Cryptosporidium*, a parasite that causes diarrhea. As of Thursday afternoon, the Utah County Health Department was reporting 46 cases, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department had 24 cases and the Davis County Health Department was working on six cases. Typically, a county only sees about three cases in a year. The chemicals used to kill germs in swimming pools and other water are not effective in killing this parasite. In addition to avoiding exposure when you're ill, officials ask that you refrain from swimming for two weeks after symptoms have subsided.

Although Crypto can infect all people, some groups are more likely to develop more serious illness.

- Young children and pregnant women may be more susceptible to the dehydration resulting from diarrhea and should drink plenty of fluids while ill.
- If you have a severely weakened immune system, you are at risk for more serious disease. Your symptoms may be more severe and could lead to serious or life-threatening illness. Examples of persons with weakened immune systems include those with HIV/AIDS; cancer and transplant patients who are taking certain immunosuppressive drugs; and those with inherited diseases that affect the immune system.

Officials say the best way to protect yourself and your family from this water-borne illness is to practice good hygiene. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has six suggestions to help you stay safe.

- ☐ Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- ☐ Don't swallow the pool water.
- ☐ Practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- ☐ Take the kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
- ☐ Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside.
- ☐ Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

For more information about Cryptosporidium, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.